

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, GR, UK

SUBJECT: VISIT OF BRITISH MINISTER OF STATE HATTERSLEY

1. BRITISH MINISTER OF STATE ROY HATTERSLEY PAID A VISIT TO ATHENS AT THE INVITATION OF THE GOG JUNE 2-5. HATTERSELY WAS ORIGNALLY SCHEDULED TO COME TO GREECE TO PARTICIPATE IN A SYMPOSIUM ON DOING BUSINESS IN GREECE ORGANIZED BY THE FINANCIAL TIMES. WHEN THE GOG LEARNED OF HIS IMMINENT ARRIVAL, IT ISSUED AN OFFICIAL INVITATION, ACCORDING TO A BRITISH EMBASSY SOURCE. THE SOURCE COMMENTED THAT WHILE THE VISIT ITSELF WAS ESSENTIALLY ROUTINE, IT WAS SIGNIFICANT FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS THAT THE SECOND MAN IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE COULD COME TO GREECE AND RECEIVE A WARM WELCOME ONLY A LITTLE OVER A YEAR AFTER DEMOSTRATING GREEKS TRIED TO BURN DOWN THE BRITISH EMBASSY (AS A RESULT OF BRITISH APPROVAL PERMITTING TURKISH CYPRIOT REFUGEES TO MOVE FROM A SBA TO TURKISH-OCCUPIED CYPRUS).

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2. DURING HIS STAY, HATTERSLEY MET WITH A HOST OF GREEK

OFFICIALS, INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS, FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS, DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF AND MINISTER OF COORDINATION PAPALIGOURAS. WITH CARAMANLIS AND BITSIOS, THE BRITISH DIGNITARY SPENT CONSIDERABLE TIME DISCUSSING THE CYPRUS QUESTION AND GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS. ACCORDING TO OUR BRITISH EMBASSY SOURCE, HE CAME AWAY WITH THE STRONG FEELING THAT THE GREEKS WERE MORE PESSIMISTIC THAN IN PREVIOUS MONTHS OVER PROSPECTS IN FINDING ADEQUATE SOLUTIONS IN THESE KEY AREAS.

3. HATTERSLEY AND AVEROFF REVIEWED BILATERAL BRITISH-GREEK MILITARY RELATIONS AND GREEK-NATO RELATIONS, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE. AVEROFF TOLD HATTERSELY OF GREECE'S STRONG WISH TO RESTORE AS CLOSE A RELATIONSHIP AS POSSIBLE WITH NATO WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS OF PRESENT GREEK DOMESTIC POLITICAL REALITIES. WITH ALL HIS INTER-LOCUTORS, AND IN DEPTH WITH PAPALIGOURAS, HATTERSLEY WENT OVER THE PENDING GREEK NEGOTIATIONS FOR ENTRY INTO THE EC. IMPRESSED BY THE REALISTIC ATTITUDE OF THESE TOP-LEVEL GREEK OFFICIALS CONCERNING THE PROBLEM AREAS AND THE PROTRACTED NEGOTIATIONS THAT MIGHT BE REQUIRED, HATTERSLEY ASSURED THE GREEKS OF BRITAIN'S FULL POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO GREEK ENTRY. (THIS THEME WAS THE ESSENCE OF HATTERSLEY'S ADDRESS TO THE FINANCIAL TIMES SYMPOSIUM AS WELL.) HE ALSO CITED THE DIFFICULT BRITISH EXPERIENCE IN NEGOTIATING HER OWN ENTRY INTO THE EC AND URGED GREECE NOT TO BECOME DISCOURAGED OR OVERREACT TO TEMPORARY SETBACKS. FOR THEIR PART, THE GREEKS APPARENTLY ARGUED FOR THE FORMAL OPENING OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE THE SUMMER BREAK TO SATISFY DOMESTIC POLITICAL EXIGENCIES (A POSITION PAPALIGOURAS HAD TAKEN WITH SIR CHRISTOPHER SOAMES WHEN THE LATTER WAS IN GREECE IN CONNECTION WITH THE JOINT EC-GREEK PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE MEETING IN CRETE LAST MONTH). PAPALIGOURAS FURTHER MENTIONED TO HATTERSLEY THAT HE HAD ALREADY BEGUN A PROGRAM TO FORESTALL UNDUE EXPECTATIONS AND EUPHORIA ON THE PART OF THE GREEK PUBLIC AND TO PREPARE IT FOR THE THOUGH BARGAINING PROCESS AHEAD.

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4. THE VISIT WAS GENERALLY ACCORDED WARM TREATMENT IN THE MEDIA, WITH THE PRO-GOVERNMENT PRESS PLAYING IT CONSIDERABLY MORE THAN THE OPPOSITION. SPECIAL EMPHASIS WAS ACCORDED HATTERSLEY'S REASSURANCES CONCERNING GREECE'S ENTRY INTO THE EC. PREDICTABLY, HOWEVER, THE COMMUNIST PRESS ADOPTED A GENERALLY CRITICAL STANCE, SPECULATING THAT HATTERSLEY WAS

REPRESENTING US-NATO INTERESTS AND HAD COME TO APPLY
EC BLACKMAIL TO FORCE GREECE TO CAVE IN TO TURKISH
DEMANDS.

5. OF SPECIAL INTEREST WITH RESPECT TO PRESS TREATMENT
OF THE VISIT WAS THE ABSENCE OF ANY REFERENCE TO THE
RECENT HOUSE OF COMMONS SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT ON CYPRUS
DURING HATTERSLEY'S STAY HERE OR OF ANY REFERENCE
TO THE PRESENCE OF A BRITISH NUCLEAR POWERED SUBMARINE IN
CORFU EARLY DURING THE SAME WEEK.
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